Empirical analysis on characteristics of Japanese consumer behaviors based on the consumption values

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1. Introduction

According to durability, goods can be divided into durable goods, semi-durable goods and non-durable goods. It is important for the producer to understand the difference in consumers' selection criteria for the three types of goods.

To compare the selection criteria of different types of goods, we used the consumption value which is proposed by Sheth(1991). The consumption value is always used to explain the reasons for purchasing specific goods or brands, including functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional values.

This study aims to clarify the characteristics of Japanese consumer behavior in connection with choosing durable, semi-durable, and non-durable goods using consumption value, and find its influential factors.

2. Data Description

Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire survey consisted of items on demographics, Japanese consumers' attitudes about goods choosing based on the material values scale proposed by Richins(2004), consumption values of three types of goods based on the consumption value scale proposed by Sweeney & Soutar (2001), with a four-point Likert scale.

Concerning data collection, survey respondents were selected from registered database using the quota sampling based on the population of each gender and age category.

Data was collected through an online survey in February 2023, and 1080 valid responses were used in data analysis.

3. Method

For the method of data analysis, Fisher's exact test was used to identify the associations between the consumption values of the three categories of goods, and the factors affecting them.

Table 1. Fisher’s exact test 2x2 contingency table

		X		
		X_1	X_2	X_{Σ}¿¿
Y	Y_1	a	b	$(a+b)$
	Y_2	c	d	$(c+d)$
	Y_{Σ}	$(a+c)$	$(b+d)$	n

X, Y: Categorical variables with two choices.

X_1, X_2, Y_1, Y_2 : Categories of variable X and Y.

a, b, c, d: Frequency when X_i exposed to Y_j.

n: Sample size $(n=a+b+c+d)$.

The formula for Fisher’s exact test is as follows:

$$P=\frac{(a+b)!(c+d)!(a+c)!(b+d)!}{n!a!b!c!d!}$$

P is the probability of observing the data if our null hypothesis is true. The null hypothesis represents that there is no association between variables. When P is less than 5%, the null hypothesis should be rejected and it means the association between two categorical variables exists.

4. Results

4.1 The Difference of Selection Criteria for 3 types of goods

Japanese consumers tend to **prioritize quality over price** when purchasing **durable and semi-durable goods**, while for **non-durable goods**, they tend to **prioritize price**(Figure 1).

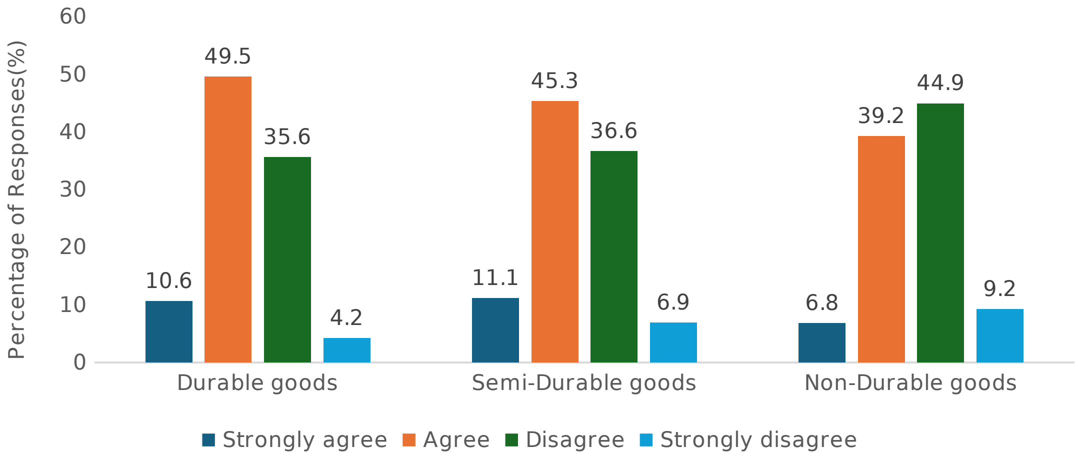

Figure 1. Percentage of responses “Quality is more important than price.”

As **durability being longer**, Japanese consumers tend to **attach greater importance to the novelty of products**(Figure 2).

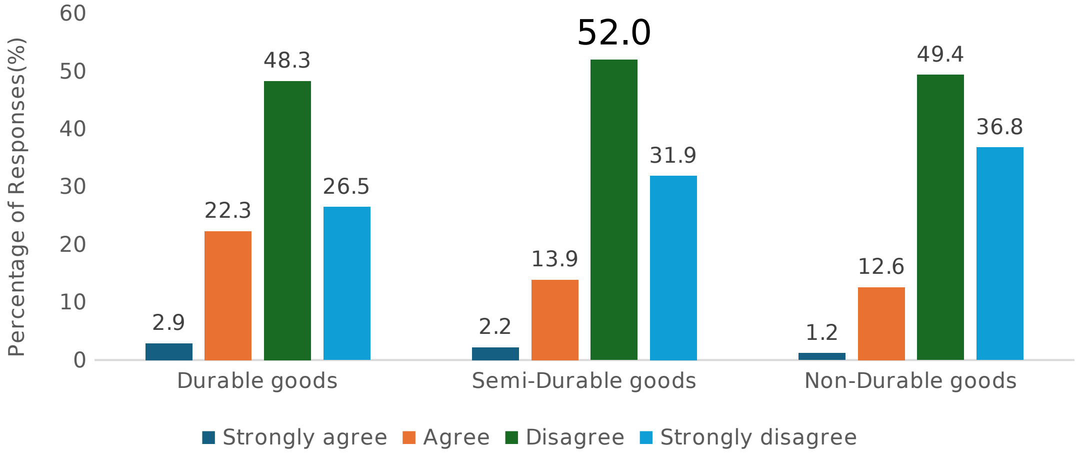

Figure 2. Percentage of responses “I prioritize the novelty of products.”

In addition, Japanese consumers focus on whether the goods are made from **health-friendly components/materials** when they choose **semi-durable and non-durable goods**, but their emphasis is on **energy-saving for durable goods**(Figure 3).

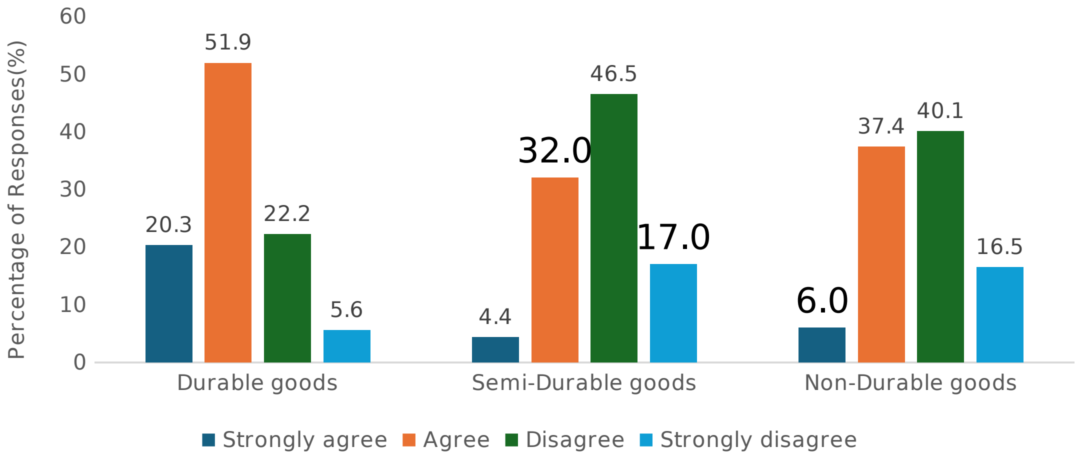

Figure 3. Percentage of responses “I prefer energy-saving durable goods” and Percentage of responses “I prefer environmental-friendly semi-durable goods and non-durable goods.”

4.2 The Influencing Factors

Table 2 summarizes the categories of demographic and consumers’ attitudes with a positive influence.

Table 2. Categories influencing consumption values positively

		Durable goods	Semi-Durable goods	Non-Durable goods
Functional Value	Quality more than Price	Elderly		Female
	Diversity of Functions	Male Desire for new products	Female High salary	Younger High salary
Epistemic Value	Novelty	Male	Success	Success
Emotional Value	Preference		Elderly	

Social Value	Environmental-friendly	▯ Female ▯ Elderly	High educated	
	Trends		Younger	Desire for new products

5. Conclusion

As durability being longer, Japanese consumers tend to **place greater emphasis on quality**, **novelty**, **diversity of performance**, **and environmental consciousness**.

Regarding **the influencing factors**, there is a significant difference in **epistemic value**.

It is considered that **male** emphasizes **novelty in purchasing durable goods** compared to female.As for **semi-durable** and **non-durable goods**, those who think that **possession of many expensive goods is a sign of success** tend to prioritize **the novelty**.

References

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